CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

DALAI LAMA HIMALAYAN TREK INDIA

Wed 25 Mar - Sun 05 Apr 2015

In aid of your choice of charity

25 Mar - 05 Apr 2015

12 DAYS | INDIA | CHALLENGING

This unique expedition combines awesome Himalayan trekking with a visit to India's exiled Tibetan community. The challenge begins and ends at the heart of the world's highest mountain range in Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama and the centre of the Tibetan community are located.

Your expedition follows the Uhl River through rhododendron and evergreen forests. The route takes in Hindu settlements and isolated Buddhist monasteries. The region remains largely unvisited, which makes it a pristine and unspoilt area to trek. Consider extending your stay to explore the Taj Mahal, Keoladeo National Park and Fatephur Sikri.

- Trek in the Indian Himalayas
- Spectacular mountain scenery
- Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries
- Experience Tibetan Life
- Optional extension to the Taj Mahal, Keoladeo National Park and Fatephur Sikri

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Wed 25 Mar*

-

International departure from London

The big day has finally arrived. Full of excitement and nerves we meet our Charity Challenge representative and the rest of our team at the airport. Wave goodbye to family and friends as we set off on our long-awaited adventure to Delhi, India.

DAY 2 *Thu 26 Mar*

-

Overnight train to Chakki Bank

A local Charity Challenge rep will be waiting at the airport for our transfer to the hotel. The day will begin with the chance to explore India's bustling capital. Test your haggling skills or soak up the sights, from the Red Fort to the Raj Ghat. Later the group will meet up for the first team dinner, before catching the overnight sleeper train to Chakki Bank.

DAY 3 *Fri 27 Mar*

-

Dharamsala

Having arrived early in Chakki Bank, it's a further three-hour transfer to Dharamsala - home to Tibet's Dalai Lama. Dotted with temples and monasteries, multi-coloured Tibetan prayer flags flutter in the wind. There will be an opportunity to learn more about the culture at the town's museum, before the group takes the traditional clockwise walk (kora) around the Dalai Lama's home. Overnight in hotel.

DAY 4 *Sat 28 Mar*

-

Dharamsala to Bir

Spend the morning further exploring Dharamsala or stroll to Bhagsunag Waterfall before transferring to Bir, at the foothills of the Himalayas. Once there, we will be welcomed at the Dream and Adventure Centre. There will be time to explore, as well as relax in the grounds of the tea plantation. Then the evening will be spent enjoying home-cooked food and really bonding with your teammates.

DAY 5 *Sun 29 Mar*

-

Trek to Majaj - 17 km

Your amazing 5-day trek begins, centred around the Uhl valley and river, home to brown & rainbow trout, and situated in the shadows of some of the world's highest peaks. To start, you trek upwards through oak and rhododendron forests towards Haribag Pass (2,500m), an ancient trading route. You will then pass by the village of Barua, where you will stop for a picnic lunch in beautiful meadows beside a shepherd's encampment, with great views of the mountains and surrounding peaks. Crossing the pass you head down to Majaj, a favourite spot for bird-watchers and nature-spotters alike, with a water-spot

that is visited at sunset. This area is well known for its diverse Himalayan wildlife and birdlife, including the Himalayan griffin vulture, Monal, Golden Eagle and the Lammergeier. A lucky few may see Thar, Musk Deer, Forest Leopard, Puma and Himalayan Black and Brown Bear. Monkeys may also amuse and join us on parts of our journey. You will celebrate the first day of the trek around the campfire. Overnight in a tented camp.

DAY 6 *Mon 30 Mar*

-

Trek to Shanag, maximum altitude 2,700m (approximately 6-7 hours)

You will walk alongside shepherds and locals, before crossing the Sun Pass at 2,700m. Pushing onwards, we follow the Thadkot River on its path through traditionally farmed terraced fields and past tiny hamlets. Tonight we get to camp in time to witness the Himalayan sunset, which casts shadows over the distant peaks.

DAY 7 *Tue 31 Mar*

-

Trek to Bahrua, maximum altitude 2,300m (approximately 6-7 hours)

Wake up beneath the snow-capped summits in the early morning sun. After a quick cuppa, it's off on a winding path upwards with spectacular views of the Shivalik Mountains. The alpine pastures around the pass are strewn with wild flowers and medicinal plants. Tonight we stay in an old colonial hunting lodge, used many years ago by the British and the Maharajas.

DAY 8 *Wed 01 Apr*

-

Rest day or optional 10km trek, max altitude 3,050m (approximately 4-5 hours)

Weary legs may need a break, so today is a rest day in preparation for the final slog. However, for those still in the mood for some exercise there are some great optional walks. We can climb a nearby peak which arguably boasts the best views in the Himalayas. The group will rendezvous again in camp for the evening meal, before spending another night under the stars.

DAY 9 *Thu 02 Apr*

-

Trek to Bal, maximum altitude 2,300m (approximately 5-6 hours)

It's the last day of our challenge and this morning is the perfect time to reflect on our journey. Today we walk from Bal to Shilpadhani, a small village surrounded by thick woodland. En route we'll witness the nomadic lifestyle of the Gaddis (Himalayan shepherds) and soak up the views for the last time – before returning to the Dream and Adventure Centre for a celebratory meal.

DAY 10 *Fri 03 Apr*

-

Dream and Adventure Centre to Baijnath Temple and Norbulinka Institute to Delhi

It's the penultimate day of and with spirits high, we travel to the Baijnath Temple which was built in 840AD. From there it's off to the Norbulinka Institute, which was established to preserve traditional Tibetan arts. Set amid Japanese Gardens, there is a serene temple with delicate bridges across tiny streams. Enjoy the peace before we head back on the overnight train to the buzz of Delhi.

DAY 11 *Sat 04 Apr*

-

Arrive home

With amazing memories and a massive sense of achievement, it's time to say goodbye to everyone, making sure we've swapped details before heading home.

NB

Please note that there is no guarantee that you will meet the Dalai Lama during this challenge. However, if he is in residence during your trek then we will attempt to secure a visit.

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

SELF FUNDER

-

Pay a registration fee of £325.00 when you book
Then a balance of £1580.00 (8 weeks before your challenge)
Raise as much as you can for your charity.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

-

Registration fee of £325.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £3225.00 for your charity.

FLEXI

-

Registration fee of £325.00 when you book
Then £325.00 towards challenge costs (8 weeks before your challenge)
Raise a minimum of £2575.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

-

- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Discount on personal equipment from The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Nomad & MASTA
- Access to "ask the expert" re your kit requirements
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Warm up exercise routines
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Fitness training notes
- Sponsorship forms (online and hard copy)
- Template press release
- A-Z of fundraising ideas
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Fundraising advice

On your challenge

-

- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Internal road and air transfers as per the itinerary
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- All ground staff including English speaking guide, drivers, cooks, and porters
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Activity equipment such as bikes, tents and rafts as per the challenge activity
- A £100 donation to your charity under the self funder option (unless stated otherwise)
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- All challenge management before, during and post event
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

-

- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Visa
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

On your challenge

-

- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Personal spending money
- Any other specific items listed as not included in your Trip Notes

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines	You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 10 weeks before departure (by 14/01/2015), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 03/05/2015). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.
Prices include all known air taxes	We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 16 - 25 participants

Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 16 participants. We can run this trip with 10-15 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £75. This is payable by you if you book as a Self Funder or your charity under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi payment option if you have raised the necessary minimum fundraising target. For Self Funders, we will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary, and it will be added to your final balance of challenge costs invoice.
Optional extras	Business class upgrades* Travel insurance Single room supplements* Extensions at end of trip* Trek/bike training weekends* (*subject to availability)
Travel insurance	Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. Charity Challenge has chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine (for UK residents) and Rise & Shield* (for non-UK residents). Both companies can arrange cover for an extensive number of activities, such as high-altitude trekking and cycling events, which include emergency medical treatment and repatriation expenses. Please note that Charity Challenge is not able to advise on matters relating to individual travel insurance policies and does not accept any liability for policy matters or claims. Full details including costs may be found at https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge and https://riseandshield.com/partners/charity-challenge/ * Rise and Shield do not provide cover to Cuba.

Level of Difficulty

The Dalai Lama Himalayan Trek challenge is graded as Challenging. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, and would like to part in a strenuous challenge and are hoping to push themselves out of their comfort zone. You could tell your supporters that during the Dalai Lama Himalayan Trek Challenge you will be:

- Trekking an average of 15km-20km per day.
- Going to high altitude, and reaching a maximum altitude of 3000 meters above sea level.
- Trekking through unique remote areas in which you will see no other tourists or trekkers
- Staying in lodges with very basic facilities, or camping

Money

Currency: The currency is the Rupee, abbreviated as Rs, and this is known as a 'closed currency', which means that you cannot import or export Rupees out of or into the UK. For up to date currency exchange, go to: http://www.xe.com/.

Credit Cards: A growing number of hotels, restaurants and shops in the major cities are beginning to accept credit cards, the well-known and more accepted ones being American Express, Access/MasterCard, Diners Club and Visas. However, credit cards are not the most convenient form of payment or cash withdrawal.

ATMs: Please note that ATMs are not always available and that when they are they do not always work. It is best to ensure that you have enough cash with you prior to starting the challenge.

How much to bring: You will not need large amounts of money during this challenge, and other than at the start and end of the trip, you will be in the mountains away from any foreign exchanges or banks. You will only need money for tips, additional food & drink, gifts & souvenirs, and for any other additional activities that you may wish to do. On average, we recommend around £200 in cash, plus a credit card for emergencies. Keep in mind that you will not be able to buy Rupees before entering India, and so you are advised to take a sufficient amount of cash that you can change at the airport or in Delhi. NB: By changing at the airport while some of the group collect the luggage you will save time – the Indian Exchanges are generally the fastest.

Tipping: Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. US$10 per person per challenge-day, and this should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge who will distribute it among the support team, including guides, assistant guides, cooks, and porters.

Visa

You must hold a full ten-year passport with at least six months to run from the end of your challenge, and at least one blank page for your visa and entry/exit stamps.
All foreign nationals require a visa to enter India. Please note that British Citizens are now eligible to get an online visa before arrival to India.

Important note: British passport holders of Pakistani origin may have difficulty in obtaining a visa for India. If the visa is granted it will certainly take much longer than for other UK nationals, and there is a chance that you may not receive it

in time to depart on your challenge. Unfortunately Charity Challenge's cancellation terms will apply in all circumstances.

Vaccinations

For up to date vaccinations information please visit the NHS Government website 'Fit for Travel' at: http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx.It may be necessary to take precautions against malaria in Delhi. This includes wearing long-sleeved shirts, long trousers and socks at dawn and dusk. You should also wear plenty of insect repellent. Please visit your travel nurse or GP to discuss vaccination advice.

Flights

You will be making a return journey from London Heathrow to Delhi, India. Your flight tickets will be given to you at the airport by your Air Welcome representative, who will meet you at the airline check-in desk. If you choose to book your own flights you must confirm with the Charity Challenge office before paying otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance).

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have a suitable travel insurance policy whilst participating on the challenge. We have a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge. If you have your own travel insurance policy, you must ensure that it provides at least the same level of cover as our recommended policy, including protecting the charity in the event of your cancellation 56 days or less prior to departure. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you should complete and return.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main FAQs page.

Group Size

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 16 people in order to run and a maximum of approximately 25 people, on account of the wilderness environment in which this challenge takes place and the unique mountain accommodation used during the trek.

Leadership

Charity Challenge employ a number of first aid qualified challenge leaders, and a tour leader who will speak fluent English. The tour leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

Climate

March/April – In the Himalayas, the temperatures in the day can vary; minimum is probably around 7c and maximum 28c, with an average of 22c. It is likely to drop below 0c in the evenings, however, so you should come fully prepared for cold nights. You will have campfires and eat inside the dining tent. As a general rule it is t-shirt weather in the day and fleece & jacket weather at night. In Delhi it will be humid and around 28-30c, but remember to bring appropriate attire for visiting religious sites.

August/September - In the Himalayas, the average daytime temperature is 20c but this can vary. The rainy season is petering off but you may still experience some rain so good waterproofs are essential. In the evenings it will be cooler (approx 5c); however, you will have campfires and eat inside the dining tent.

October/November - In the Himalayas, the average daytime temperature is 15c but this can vary. There is little rain (average 7mm) at this time of year but you may well still experience some rain so waterproofs are optional. It is likely to drop below 0c in the evenings, and so you should come fully prepared for cold nights.

Terrain

The terrain is mountainous throughout, and you will be trekking on mountain paths. Taking on some treks within the UK will be excellent training for this terrain. Expect cold weather and basic conditions.

Luggage allowance and valuables

Try to keep luggage to an absolute minimum – details of what to pack are provided in your kit list. Your rucksack/holdall (suitcases are not appropriate) must not exceed the maximum weight limit of the airline you are flying with (usually 20kg, however do check this with the airline or contact our flights team if in doubt). Each trekking day, your personal kit will be transported to the next stop by a support vehicle. You will carry a daypack for your daily needs such as sun cream, lunch, water, camera and lightweight waterproofs.

We will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions. The general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches.

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our Responsible Tourism pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

Typical day

You will wake early (around sunrise) in time for a light breakfast. Walking days will last 5–8 hours. Trekking on your challenge will take place on mountain paths. Most days will involve around 1-3 steep ascents and descents with time to stop and take it at your own pace. Packed lunch will be provided and usually served around noon. You will arrive at camp before sunset in order to wash before it gets dark. Supper will be prepared and we can relax as the stars come out.

Accommodation

While trekking you will be staying in two-person tents and lodge accommodation. At the beginning and end of the challenge, you will be staying in slightly more comfortable hotel accommodation. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with please let Charity Challenge know in advance.

Food & Drink

You will be served a variety of European and Indian food. All meals are healthy, nourishing and plentiful. Homemade cake, cocoa, tea or coffee will be served before bed. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks. You don't need a clean pair every day, but enough to make sure you have dry socks each morning. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are high quality gore-tex waterproof and windproof jackets and trousers, and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Walking poles are also recommended, as a preventative as well as for anyone with any pre-existing leg injuries or niggles. A full kit list for this challenge can be found here, once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Toilets

At every campsite, a dug-in toilet will be improvised in a separate tent. This will be located at some distance from the campsite. Please bring anti-bacterial hand gel and spare tissues. During the trekking days, toilet facilities will be limited to the great outdoors!

Phone and WiFi

Apart from in Delhi, the internet and phone reception will be limited throughout the challenge. You will not have WiFi in the basic accommodation during the trekking days, and phone reception on the mountain will be sporadic at best. You should look on this challenge as an opportunity to get away from the stresses of daily life!

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of its participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. In a nutshell, Our Challenge Safe brand formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the activity itself. Your welfare is paramount!

In terms of your Dalai Lama Himalayan Trek Challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- You will be trekking to high altitude, which has its own risks
- You will be taking an overnight train in 4 berth public carriages to get to Dharamsala and back to Delhi.
- When temperatures are hot, the risks of become dehydrated and succombing to sunstroke are very high. You should be drinking over 2L of water per day during the trekking and using sunscreen continuously.

Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking abilities. This is allowed for. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. In the event of an emergency on your trek, all guides and leaders are maintaining contact via radio.

Training

Training and fitness are definitely required. Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be OK as long as they train regularly over a period of at least three months leading up to the expedition. Don't forget that the temperature and the altitudes are different from the UK. While strength is important, endurance training should be your primary focus. Walking up hills and climbing stairs are both ways to condition your lower body. Begin slowly, without the weight of a pack, eventually adding weight as you increase your training pace. Take a long hike (6-8 hours) several times with a weighted pack, up and down hills or on small mountains (weigh your pack with water containers and pour out the water before your descent to minimise knee stress).

Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the

link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more here

“

Taking part in this trek was a life changing experience for me. I not only proved to myself that no matter how hard something seems, anything can be accomplished. Seeing first-hand how people in these communities and villages live and exist was very humbling and made me realise just what is important in life. Everyone should experience this at least once in their lives.

Laura Shone

“

This trek is a perfect introduction to India taking you from the madness of Delhi and Agra to the beauty and tranquillity of the mountains. Two weeks seemed like a month to me as we saw and experienced so much. I fell in love with the rural villages and mountains and want to return again.

Vanessa Beech

“

From start to finish I found the whole trip to be everything I had hoped it would be. The actual daily activities were challenging and yet when returning to camp, a warm atmosphere was present to lighten the mood and raise the spirits. A great experience!

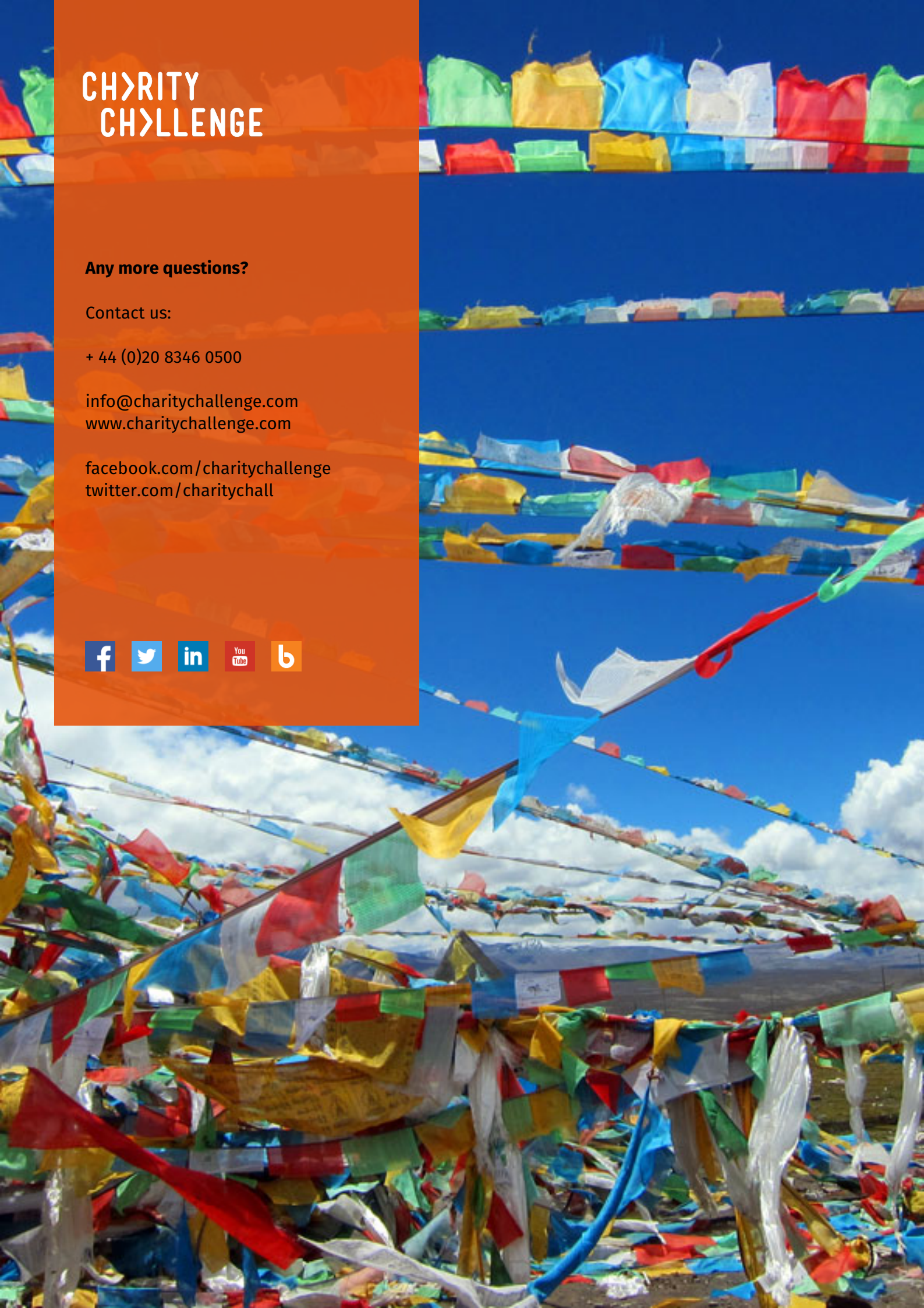
David Hart

CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

Any more questions?

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

info@charitychallenge.com
www.charitychallenge.com

facebook.com/charitychallenge
twitter.com/charitychall